

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAJ-01 SCI-06 CIEP-03 OMB-01 TRSE-00 COME-00

EB-11 NIC-01 FRB-03 DRC-01 /128 W

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TAGS: EGEN, PGOV, PFOR, BU

SUBJECT: COMMITTEE FOR FOREIGN ECONOMIC RELATIONS FORMED

1. COUNCIL OF MINISTERS ON AUGUST 1 ESTABLISHED A "COMMITTEE FOR FOREIGN ECONOMIC RELATIONS" AND NAMED NIKOLA KALCHEV ITS CHAIRMAN WITH MINISTERIAL RANK. KALCHEV HAD BEEN A FIRST DEPUTY MINISTER IN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE AND DIRECTOR GENERAL OF TECHNOCOMPLEKT. RESPONSIBILITIES AND FUNCTIONS OF NEW COMMITTEE WERE NOT EXPLAINED IN PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT AUGUST 2, AND INQUIRIES HAVE SO FAR NOT BEEN VERY PRODUCTIVE.

2. WHEN OFFICIALS OF MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE WERE ASKED WHETHER RESPONSIBILITIES OF NEW COMMITTEE SEEM TO OVERLAP WITH THOSE OF MINISTRY, THEY SAID FORMATION OF COMMITTEE CAME AS SURPRISE TO THEM AND THEIR COLLEAGUES. CLAIMED THEY LEARNED ABOUT IT FROM MORNING PRESS. MADE OBSERVATION THAT MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE WAS CONSTITUTIONALLY ESTABLISHED AND "TO ABOLISH IT WOULD MEAN CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE." OFFICIAL REMARKED THAT THERE HAD BEEN TALK ABOUT PUTTING ALL FOREIGN TRADE ENTERPRISES UNDER GOVERNMENT UMBRELLA AND THIS MIGHT BE

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REASON FOR CREATION OF COMMITTEE.

3. MOST RECENT UNCONFIRMED INFORMATION IS THAT COMMITTEE IS TO HAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL MEDIUM OR LONG-TERM TRANSACTIONS BETWEEN FOREIGN FIRMS (NOT CLEAR IF THIS INCLUDED THOSE OF CEMA COUNTRIES) AND BULGARIAN ENTERPRISES. IF THIS TRUE, ARRANGEMENT SUCH AS THOSE OF KAISER WOULD BE OVERSEEN BY NEW COMMITTEE.

4. IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT NEW COMMITTEE'S RESPONSIBILITIES WILL INCLUDE SOME OF THOSE FORMERLY HELD BY FOREIGN TRADE MINISTRY. MINISTRY OFFICIALS WERE DEFENSIVE ABOUT SITUATION AND PROBABLY WERE CAUGHT UNAWARES. INTERESTING THAT FOREIGN TRADE FIRST DEPUTY MINISTER LUKANOV WHO WAS ON LEAVE CUT IT SHORT AND RETURNED TO SOFIA AUGUST 2. RUMORS NOW ARE THAT MINISTRY HAS HAD ITS WINGS TRIMMED. BUT EVEN AFTER HIS ELEVATION IN STATUS, KALCHEV WILL BE CLEARLY SUBORDINATE TO AUTHORITY OF VICE PREMIER IVAN POPOV.
HERZ

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